AN

Election Sermon,

DELIVERED AT *CONCORD*, JUNE 4, 1800,

IN PRESENCE OF

HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR

John Taylor Gilman, Esquire,

THE HONORABLE

Council and Senate,

AND

Gentlemen of the House of Representatives.

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Election Sermon, 1800.

JUDGES III. 11. *And the land had reſt forty years: And* OTHNIEL, *the Son of* Kenaz, *died.*

PUBLIC felicity is the great object of civil government. Men are formed for ſociety, and much of their happineſs reſults from ſocial intercourſe. But ſuch are the diſpoſitions and paſſions of men, that the reſtraints of government are neceſſary to their happineſs. Anarchy is a ſtate of ſociety, more to be dreaded, than abſolute monarchy. But elective government is preferable to either. Yet, whether the government be elective, hereditary, or aſſumed, the happineſs of community ought to be its object. And aſſumed government, with public happineſs for its object, is preferable to elective government if this object be diſregarded.

UNDER any form of government, much is depending on the moral characters of thoſe in authority. When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: But when the wicked bear rule the people mourn. The truth of theſe maxims, has been illuſtrated in the hiſtory of many nations; but in none more clearly than in the hiſtory of the ſeed of Jacob.

DIFFERENT, at different periods, were the forms of government to which that nation was ſubjected. But under either form the happineſs of the people greatly depended on the moral characters of their Rulers. When they had good Judges, or good Kings, the people proſpered and the nation was happy. But when the ſeats of government were filled with wicked men, calamity, depreſſion and diſtreſs were the portion of the people.

OTHNIEL came into public view, as a ruler, when the people of Iſrael were in great affliction. They had done evil in the ſight of the LORD; therefore, the anger of the

LORD was hot againſt Iſrael, and he ſold them into the hand of Chuſhan-riſhathaim King of Meſopotamia. In their affliction they cried unto the LORD; and he raiſed up OTHNIEL as their deliverer. Soon he ſubdued the King of Meſopotamia, and delivered the children of Iſrael from their oppreſſion. And in the time of his adminiſtration the land had reſt forty years.

THIS *reſt* included, it is probable, exemption from wars with other nations, internal peace, and national proſperity. And this happy ſtate of the nation is to be attributed to OTHNIEL as an inſtrument in the hand of GOD.

AT the cloſe of theſe forty years, OTHNIEL finiſhed his courſe; and great was the loſs the nation ſuſtained when he left the world. For, with his death, the *reſt* of the land expired. Soon the people did evil again in the ſight of the LORD, and ſoon they were brought into tribulation. The text affords us two important ideas for illuſtration:

I. THAT the happineſs of a people greatly depends on having good men in authority. II. That the beſt of rulers, as well as other men, are liable to death.

IN attending to the firſt of theſe obſervations, it may be proper, briefly to deſcribe the moral character of a good ruler, and then ſhow how the happineſs of a community depends on having good men in authority.

IT will readily be granted that every good man is not qualified to govern. Rulers ſhould be *able men*; men of extenſive knowledge, ſtrength of mind, and natural ſtability. But although this ability be greatly important in the character of a ruler, it cannot be *more* important than rectitude of heart, or a good moral character. For, however great this ability may be, it is all under the influence and direction of the heart. It may therefore be obſerved:

1. THAT the good ruler poſſeſſes a temper of heart ſuited to the great object of civil government—the greateſt happineſs of community. Such is the reliſh of his heart that public good is a ſource of perſonal delight. He ſeeks not his own profit, but the profit of many—and in the profit of many he finds his own comfort. This is true benevolence.

PLEASURE is the ſpring of intelligent, voluntary exertion in all men, whether they be good or bad. An object, in contemplation, muſt pleaſe us, viewed as a good in itſelf, or as a mean of obtaining ſomething which is viewed as a good, or we ſhall never exert ourſelves to obtain it. When the public good is to the ruler a ſource of perſonal pleaſure, he will purſue it with all his heart, ſoul, mind and ſtrength. He will ſacrifice every inferior object which ſtands in competition. He will not count even his life dear to himſelf, when the public good requires that it ſhould be expoſed.

A RULER of this diſpoſition will make the affairs of government a principal object of his ſtudy. How can I beſt promote the happineſs of thoſe for whom I am appointed to act? will be his grand enquiry. Every meaſure which he views as tending to this beloved object, he will adopt and purſue. And that which he views as incompatible with the public good he will as carefully avoid whatever private emolument he might obtain by deviating from the path of rectitude.

IN all matters of *property*, or *privilege*, which come under his conſideration, the greateſt good of the greateſt number will be the mark to which his eye will be directed. Not what will be moſt for his perſonal intereſt, or the intereſt of the particular town or diſtrict with which he is more immediately connected. His perſonal intereſt he will ſubordinate to the intereſt of a town; the intereſt of a town to the intereſt of a county; the intereſt of a county to the intereſt of a ſtate; and the intereſt of a ſtate to the intereſt of the nation.

IN the great buſineſs of legiſlation, he will endeavor that no law ſhall be enacted which will, in its operation, be prejudicial to public happineſs; and that every law ſhall be enacted which the common intereſt requires.

IF called to execute the laws of the ſtate, the good Ruler will aim to be a miniſter of GOD for good. He will purſue ſuch a line of conduct as is beſt calculated to render the laws energetic and uſeful. Therefore, he will carefully attend to his own heart, to the motives by which

he is governed; endeavoring to keep his eye ſingle, that his whole body may be full of light.

2. THE *good ruler* is a *good ſubject*. NO man can be deemed properly qualified to rule over others, who is known to be a *rebel* to the lawful authority which reſpects himſelf. It muſt hence follow, that the good ruler is one who fears GOD and trembles at his word. He reveres the laws of the great Jehovah, and makes it his ſtudy and delight to do the will of his Father, who is in heaven. He is not aſhamed to bow the knee to the *King* of *Kings*: nor to ſay, *practically*, How amiable are thy tabernacles, O LORD! How can any man expect to be loved and venerated as a ruler, while it is known that he deſpiſes the authority of his Maker? Can he reaſonably expect to be reverenced as a Political Father, Legiſlator, or Magiſtrate, while he wantonly ſports with the laws of heaven, and takes the name of GOD in vain?

IT is, moreover, to be obſerved that in elective governments, rulers are under the laws of the ſtate: And in this reſpect the *good* ruler is a *good* ſubject. When he has been engaged in the ſolemn buſineſs of legiſlation, or when he has taken the oath of a Magiſtrate, he does not feel himſelf at liberty to ſet the example of diſobedience. If the laws of the ſtate forbid fraud, injuſtice, defamation, drunkenneſs, gaming, adultery and profane ſwearing, the good ruler will keep himſelf pure from ſuch vices. And will ſet an example of ſtrict obedience to the laws which he has aſſiſted in forming, or which he has ſworn to execute.

WHEN a Ruler indulges himſelf in an open and habitual violation of the laws, his conduct has a direct tendency to the annihilation of government. Should his example be generally followed, of what avail is the law he violates? And if *one* law may be trampled upon with impunity, why not *another*?—Why not *all*?

THE good Ruler is, therefore, a man of religion and good morals. And the irreligious and immoral Ruler belongs to the black catalogue of the followers of Jeroboam the ſon of Nebat who made Iſrael to ſin.——The pro-

priety of these observations may appear more clearly if we proceed to consider, how the happiness of community pends on having good men in authority.

As this is a point of great importance, you will indulge me the liberty of illustrating it in the most familiar manner. We will descend from states to families, which are the smallest societies, and may be considered as states in miniature. Three examples may answer the present purpose.

The first example may be that of *Benevolus*. He and his wife are one;—one flesh, one in affection and one in sentiment with regard to family government. His heart is impartial and friendly, and his conduct is uniform. The good of his family lies near his heart, is the source of his delight, and, consequently, the object of his daily study, prayer and pursuit. He enacts laws for the government of his family, and every law he enacts is designed for the benefit of his household—He is punctual to see that his laws are duly regarded—For he very justly believes that it tends to enervate government to be remiss in executing any law he enacts. Thus he reasons upon the subject; If I allow one law to be transgressed, without evidencing any concern or displeasure, my children will be encouraged to transgress in another respect; and thus by degrees my authority will be lost, and my family exposed to ruin.

Among the judicious laws he has enacted, the following have their place, "No one of the family shall defraud or do injustice to another—There shall be no defaming, no drunkenness, no quarrelling, no gaming, and no profane swearing." That these are conducive to the welfare of a family, very few will have the effrontery to deny. That *Benevolus* views them as good, he evidences to his family by his own example. For his family have opportunity to observe his deportment. They see him just in his dealings, faithful to his word, peaceable and kind to his neighbors, and to his household. And they never see him intoxicated, nor hear him swear. If any of the family are guilty of transgression, they are sure to be called to account. But when the good man reproves or punishes, he does it in such a manner as to evidence that he has still a

father's heart, and that he aims at their good. Is it needful to add, that this family has *reſt?* that they are happy? and that all the members of the family have a great veneration for *Benevolus?*

SUCH was the influence of OTHNIEL as Ruler in Iſrael—It is, indeed, poſſible that under the care of ſuch a parent as *Benevolus* there may be ſome children of ſuch a refractory ſpirit, and ſo ſtrongly inclined to vicious courſes, that the beſt mode of government will not be ſufficient to reſtrain them—Eſpecially if neighboring children are allowed to act without reſtraint. So it may be in a State under the government of an OTHNIEL. But the queſtion is, what is the probability? Or, what is the tendency of having authority in ſuch hands?

THE ſecond example to be brought into view is that of the family of *Sobrietas.* He is, perhaps, as good a man as *Benevolus*; but he was not ſo happy in the choice of a companion. For the name of his wife is *Jezebel.* He is too good to quarrel with her, and patiently endures his trial. The laws he has eſtabliſhed for the government of his family, were copied from the laws of *Benevolus.* And it would be the delight of his heart to execute them thoroughly. But, by the ill temper and evil example of his wife, his hands are weakened. It is ſeverely trying to him to reprove, or correct, his children for acts of diſobedience, while they tell him to his face that they have the example of their mother to juſtify their conduct.

SOME of the children are influenced by their father, follow his examples and obey his commands. But the greater part imitate the example of *Jezebel,* and bid fair for ruin. They murmur againſt the government of their father, wiſh him dead, and even conſpire to take his life. For they aſpire after "*liberty* and *equality,*" in a modern ſenſe of the terms.

THIS family, you will readily ſuppoſe, has but little *reſt.* And this example illuſtrates the unhappy ſituation of a ſtate, in which the rulers are divided in character, and oppoſed to each other.

THE family of *Impiator* is the third and laſt example

now to be conſidered. His name is expreſſive of his character; for, he fears not GOD, neither does he regard the good of his family. His wife is bone of his bone and fleſh of his fleſh. For faſhion ſake, *Impiator* has, profeſſedly, adopted the laws of his neighbors juſt mentioned. And he affects to call them very good. But, by his example, he tells his children they are unworthy of regard. He forbids fraud and injuſtice; but his children ſee him practiſe both. He forbids railing and defamation; but his children hear him rail and defame. He forbids contention and wrangling; but he quarrels with his neighbors and quarrels with his wife. He forbids gaming and profane ſwearing, but he practiſes gaming by day and by night, and ſeldom talks five minutes without uttering ſome profane oath or curſe.

UNDER the government of ſuch a parent, as might reaſonably be expected, the children frequently tranſgreſs; and that too in the preſence of *Impiator*. But what, you will aſk, can he ſay, or do, in ſuch circumſtances? He is, indeed, difficulted; but he has various modes of proceeding. Sometimes he laughs, and, fool like, makes a mock at ſin—Sometimes he connives and pretends not to ſee nor hear. And ſometimes he pretends to reprove or to puniſh. But he has no government of himſelf, and often commits ten crimes in attempting to reprove or puniſh for one. He will *curſe* his children for *ſwearing*, *quarrel* with them for *contending* with each other, and be *drunk* with *paſſion* while he puniſhes them for *intemperance*.

IN vain it would be for any man to affirm that this family has *reſt*. And it is needleſs to obſerve, to this audience, that the family of *Impiator* is *Hell* or *France* in *miniature*.

THESE examples ſufficiently evince that to have good men in authority is of great importance to public happineſs. And it is time to turn our attention to the other idea.

Secondly. THE beſt of rulers, as well as other men, are liable to death.

THE truth of this obſervation is indiſputable, and alrea-

dy obvious to the reflecting mind. It is, however, an idea worthy to be dwelt upon, and can never be too ſeriouſly contemplated. It is a truth ſuggeſted by our text, and it has been illuſtrated by the hiſtory of paſt ages.

HERE we might bring into view a long catalogue of eminently good Rulers who have lived at different periods, and in different parts of the world, all of whom are now numbered among the dead.—But need we review the pages of ancient hiſtory, or traverſe foreign realms, for the illuſtration of this affecting truth? Has not the Sovereign Diſpoſer of events impreſſed this idea upon our minds, in a manner indelible, by a recent event in our own land? By the *mortality* of the *immortal* WASHINGTON?—Though the days of formal mourning are ended, yet our hearts are pained at the recollection of that awful event. Never, perhaps, ſince the commencement of time, was a more general and unaffected mourning occaſioned by the death of one man.

THOUGH it may be deemed immethodical, it is preſumed it will not be diſagreeable, in this place, to make this ſerious enquiry, Why did the death of this illuſtrious perſonage occaſion ſuch a deep and extenſive mourning?

IT may, in truth, be ſaid, He was a man of great talents —He was General-iſſimo of our forces during the revolutionary war—He was eight years Preſident of the United States—At the time of his deceaſe he was Lieutenant-General and Commander in Chief of the Federal Army.—To theſe it may be added, that he was a man of great wealth. But are all theſe things collectively conſidered ſufficient to account for ſuch univerſal lamentation? Indeed they are not! Perhaps men of as great talents and as great riches as WASHINGTON poſſeſſed, have left the world as Jehoram did, who *departed without being deſired.* And how many Generals, Princes, Kings and Emperors have taken their flight to the general joy of mankind!

THIS ſhows that great talents, great titles, and great riches are not ſufficient to endear a ruler to his fellow creatures ſo as to ſecure a tribute of mournful reſpect after his

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THIS ſhows that great talents, great titles, and great riches are not ſufficient to endear a ruler to his fellow creatures ſo as to ſecure a tribute of mournful reſpect after his

deceaſe. Great talents, great titles and great riches may, indeed, ſecure to a man a kind of ſervile and adulatory reſpect during his life and proſperity. And he may flatter himſelf that he is a man *greatly beloved*, while all the reſpect ſhown him, is beſtowed upon the ſame ground on which the ancient *Banians* worſhipped the devil. They believed in the exiſtence of a good GOD, but they worſhipped the devil becauſe they viewed him as a malignant being, and capable of doing them great miſchief. The death of a man, who is reſpected only on this principle, will ever occaſion more *joy* than *grief*—He will aſſuredly depart without being deſired.

THE elevated ſtations in which WASHINGTON had been placed, gave opportunity for the diſplay of his *talents*, and for the diſplay of his *heart*. But, had he in thoſe exalted ſituations evidenced the diſpoſition of a Roman *Nero*, a Syracuſian *Dionyſius*, or a French *Robeſpierre*, the news of his death would have diffuſed joy through the WORLD.

WE are, therefore, naturally led to this concluſion that HE whoſe death has occaſioned ſuch unparralleled grief, had manifeſted that his talents were under the direction of a friendly and amiable diſpoſition of heart—that in diſcharging the duties of the eminent offices he has ſuſtained, he made it to appear, that he ſought the happineſs of his fellow creatures—that their good was the ſource of his joy and the object at which he aimed—And, that, in this way he became the man *greatly beloved*, and, conſequently, *greatly lamented*.

HIS death, and the mourning conſequent upon his deceaſe, afford affecting and inſtructive leſſons for all who are called to rule over men.

IF ſo great a man as WASHINGTON has yielded to death, no man may expect exemption on the ground of greatneſs or fame. As it may be doubted whether death in all its ravages ever mowed down a more eminent ſtateſman, or General, ſo it may be doubted whether his ſuperior is now living, among the many millions of the human race. Every ruler may, therefore, with propriety, ſay to

himſelf, As ſurely as WASHINGTON is dead, ſo ſurely *I* muſt die! Nor would it be degrading to any ruler, in a view of this event, ſhould he ſeriouſly attend to ſuch an enquiry as this;—Am I prepared for the ſolemn event of diſſolution? Has my conduct been ſuch as a man, and as a ruler, that I could leave the world in peace? Could the omniſcient and all holy Judge ſay to me, *Well done, thou good and faithful ſervant?*

AS the death of WASHINGTON is a ſolemn lecture on mortality to all rulers, ſo the mourning occaſioned by his departure, may teach them what line of conduct to purſue that their memory may be bleſſed. Well may every ruler put to himſelf queſtions like theſe—Have I, by humble and faithful conduct, in the offices I have ſuſtained, *endeared* myſelf to my fellow men, and thus laid a foundation for public grief when I ſhall be numbered among the dead? Will the circle of my acquaintance have reaſon to feel my death as a public calamity, & to mourn that real worth has left the world? Have I done any thing noble and praiſe-worthy which will enſure that my name ſhall be handed down to unborn ages and command veneration? Have I not *perverted* my talents, uſed my power and influence for the purpoſes of miſchief? Has public tranquility and happineſs been the ſource of my joy, the ſubject of my ſtudy, and the object of my purſuit? Or, have I, like a *plundering incendiary*, kindled fires in community, that I might profit by the misfortunes of others? Have I been diligent and faithful in diſcharging the duties attached to the offices which the public have beſtowed on me? Or, have I been a ſlothful ſervant, or drone, or a cypher?—O how *lamentable*, that men of public characters ſhould die *unlamented!* But ſuch has been deſervedly the fate of multitudes who have poſſeſſed high and honorable ſituations.

BEFORE we quit this part of the ſubject, and loſe ſight of the venerable character of WASHINGTON, I muſt be permitted to ſtate a few ſerious interrogations——Does the character of this BELOVED MAN appear *leſs* amiable on account that he was *not* a man of *profane lips* and *li-*

centious morals ?—that he was *not* aſhamed to profeſs a veneration for the character and government of the GREAT JEHOVAH, and the religion of our GLORIOUS REDEEMER? Do theſe things *now* appear as blemiſhes in his character? Should we eſteem it ornamental if his Biographer ſhould relate, that his converſation abounded with profane oaths and curſes—that he devoted much of his time to revelling, debauchery and diſſipation—that he was above the fear of GOD—that he made holy men and holy things the objects of his ridicule—And, that he did much to illuminate the world with the modern principles of infidelity? If ſuch an account ſhould be publiſhed concerning him, ſhould we not view it as really *ſlanderous* and *defamatory ?*

BUT if ſuch things would have *ſtained* the character of a WASHINGTON, to *whom* can they be *ornamental ?* Indeed any character muſt be ſunk *below degradation*, if ſuch things pertaining to it do not form an intolerable blemiſh.

O how do other names diminiſh, when compared with WASHINGTON! Let ten thouſands of the moſt renowned *infidel* philoſophers, *profane* generals, and *irreligious* ſtateſmen be laid in an equal balance againſt him, and we ſhould be conſtrained to cry out, What is the *chaff* to the *wheat!* What is the *droſs* to the *gold!* Or let the whole race of profligate and irreligious rulers be ſeated in the temple of fame, then let the character of WASHINGTON riſe up in their preſence, and their glory would diſappear like the *lamps* of *night* before the GREAT LUMINARY of the WORLD!

THE way is now open for ſome reflections and remarks.

1. HOW rich and abundant has been the goodneſs of GOD to our land!—To us he has given national exiſtence, an admirable conſtitution, with invaluable privileges both civil and religious. And he hath bleſſed us with two OTHNIELS, in ſucceſſion, to preſide in our national government; by whoſe firmneſs, wiſdom and prudence our land has had nearly twelve years of *reſt*.

TO ſee and to feel our obligation, in this reſpect; we ſhould duly conſider how we have been diſtinguiſhed

from the unhappy people of France. The world can ſcarcely furniſh a greater contraſt of *good* and *bad* characters than what may be ſeen by comparing our WASHINGTON and ADAMS with the unprincipled *Vultures* who have ſucceſſively governed in that nation, ſince the murder of their King.

FREQUENT have been their changes, and ſurrounding nations have been hoping that their changes would be for the better. But, to tell which of their *Firſt Magiſtrates* has been the *beſt*, would, probably, be as difficult as to tell which of the ſame number of *ravens* is the *whiteſt*. Perhaps there has never been, in any nation, ſuch a multiplied ſucceſſion of rulers, to whom the inſpired deſcription of human depravity would apply *more literally*, with *more pertinency*, or with *more emphaſis* than to the modern rulers of the French nation.

" AS it is written, There is none righteous; no, not one. There is none that underſtandeth; there is none that ſeeketh after GOD. They are all gone out of the way; they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open ſepulchre; with their tongues they have uſed deceit; the poiſon of aſps is under their lips: Whoſe mouth is full of curſing and bitterneſs. Their feet are ſwift to ſhed blood. Deſtruction and miſery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known. There is no fear of GOD before their eyes."

WITH ſuch men at the head of government, no nation can be happy. Convulſions, tumults, inſurrections, terror and deſtruction are but the natural fruits of having ſuch ambitious, unprincipled and atheiſtical characters in office. To the influence of ſuch characters it is to be attributed that France has been, for ſo many years, the " *Bedlam* of the Univerſe."

THIS wretched nation have not only often changed their officers, but alſo their form of government. Repeatedly they have *revolutionized* their *revolution*. Still they have been like the troubled ſea which cannot *reſt*.

OF late they have formed a new conſtitution under the influence of *Buonaparte*. He, accordingly, was ſo framed into the building, that the people, by accepting the conſtitution, *raiſed* him to the dignity of *Arch Conſul*, or Sovereign Dictator. But if France has much *reſt* under his adminiſtrations, without any change in his character, it may be deemed as great a miracle as the preſervation of Daniel in the Den of Lions, or the *reſt* of Shadrach and his companions in Nebuchadnezzar's furnace.

WE need no better evidence of a character depraved, vain, unprincipled and unqualified to govern, than he has given in his ſpeeches, letters, proclamations and general orders. As a ſpecimen of his character we may notice, at one time he is paying hypocritical homage to his Holineſs the Pope—Anon, with the ſame ſincerity, he avows himſelf, and the French people to be followers of Mahomet—And again, with a degree of impiety and arrogance at which *Lucifer* might *bluſh*, you will hear him *ſwearing* by *himſelf*.

TEARS of grief muſt trickle from the eye of humanity at the thought of having twenty five millions of people ſubject to the government of ſuch a character. And can we, O Americans! with ſuch a ſcene of horror before our eyes, be ſo *ungrateful* to the Father of Mercies, and ſo *deluded* reſpecting our own happineſs, as to wiſh to exchange our amiable ADAMS for *any* man who is an advocate for *French characters* or *French principles!*

TO what has been ſaid in favor of the characters of our illuſtrious Preſidents, ſome may object, that neither of them have given univerſal ſatisfaction; and, that the tranquility of our land has been diſturbed by the exiſtence of a party oppoſed to their adminiſtrations.

IN reply to ſuch an objection, it muſt be acknowledged that the *reſt* of our land has not been *perfect*. And it would, probably, be very unjuſt to attribute a malignant, diſorganizing ſpirit to all who have been diſſatisfied. It is believed that by far the greater part of thoſe who have appeared in oppoſition to government, have been influenced and miſled by falſe information. And when it ſhall

be duly conſidered by what *agents*, and by what *means* the oppoſition to government has been promoted, this oppoſition may appear rather in *favor* than *againſt* the characters of the Preſidents. When recourſe muſt be had to falſhood and invidious miſrepreſentation, to diminiſh public confidence in public characters, the candid mind is naturally led to this concluſion, that there is no *juſt* ground of accuſation. As in the caſe of our Saviour, the ſuborning of falſe witneſſes, with a view to his condemnation, was evidence of his innocency and uprightneſs.

THE diſpoſition for malevolent ſlander, falſhood and miſrepreſentation was abundantly charged upon the writers in oppoſition to government before the Sedition Act had exiſtence. And the feelings of *ſome* who were friendly to government, were hurt by the freedom which others uſed in this reſpect. To ſay the leaſt, it was ſo with *one*. But when the ſedition act took place, it operated as a *teſt act*, as to the ſpirit by which the oppoſers of government were influenced.

THIS act, it is to be obſerved, did not aim to expoſe any one to penalty for uttering or publiſhing *any thing* which was *true* againſt the Preſident or any in authority. The penalty was levelled *only* againſt ſuch as ſhould utter or publiſh *falſhood* with *evil intention*.

NOW, had there not been, in the oppoſers of government, a diſpoſition for publiſhing *falſe* and malicious ſlander, and a conſciouſneſs that the character of the Preſident could not be ſullied by telling the *truth*, why did they raiſe ſuch a clamor about the liberty of the Preſs? Or why was the liberty of publiſhing *falſhood* held ſo *dear*, if they had no deſire to practiſe it, and if the practice did not pertain to their cauſe? Can a man feel himſelf injured by the exiſtence of a law, which does not, in his view of it, interfere with the propenſity of his own heart, or the object of his purſuit? No, it is impoſſible.

HAD the ſedition act, like the imperious decree of *Buonaparte* ſelected a few favorite *newſpapers* for continuance, and with one ſtroke ſuppreſſed all others, and alſo determined the ſuppreſſion of thoſe ſelected upon their

publiſhing any thing againſt Government, whether *true* or *falſe*, there would have been ſome ground for complaint. But, when men complain of an abridgement of liberty becauſe a law exiſts againſt *falſe*, *invidious* and *ſeditious* ſlander, do they not tell the world that, according to their feelings, it would be a *precious privilege* to *lie* with *impunity*? Thus have the writers in oppoſition to government announced their characters to the world!—And if we have no reaſon to ſuſpect the character of JEHOVAH on account that the *Father of lies* is oppoſed to his government, neither have we any reaſon to ſuſpect the characters of WASHINGTON and ADAMS, on account that *men* who will *contend* for the *privilege* of *lying* have not been pleaſed with their adminiſtrations.

2. WE may notice the vaſt importance of chriſtianity in relation to civil government and the happineſs of community.

IN this *age of reaſon*, or rather of *infidelity*, there are many who explode and vilify the Chriſtian religion as uſeleſs, and even deſtructive to the freedom and happineſs of mankind.—If it can be made to appear that this cenſure is juſt, we will cheerfully join with thoſe Philoſophers in an attempt to exterminate the chriſtian religion from the abodes of men. But let us firſt, in the exerciſe of candor, endeavour to aſcertain what Chriſtianity is, and what its tendency, leſt haply we be found even to fight againſt GOD.

TO determine the nature of Chriſtianity we have ſomething more to do than to *rake* the characters of thoſe profeſſors whoſe conduct is a ſcandal to the Chriſtian name. It would be deemed a *ſorry*

method of conduct if the inhabitants of neighboring states should censure our laws, as *bad*, because we have some *villains* in our community. Any person who should conduct on this principle we should esteem as very *ignorant* or very *wicked*. And we should be at no loss to point out to him a more rational method of ascertaining the nature of our laws. We should direct him carefully to examine the constitution of government, and the particular laws of the State, and observe what they prohibit and what they enjoin, and consider what would be their effect on society if duly regarded. So if we would ascertain the nature of Christianity, we must look directly to the spirit of the doctrines, and precepts of the gospel—and to the example of the GREAT REDEEMER. And, hence, learn what *temper* and what *practice* are inculcated on mankind; and what would be the effect on society if the principles of Christianity were reduced to practice.

BY such a scrutiny it would appear, that *pure benevolence* is the *essence* of *christianity*. To excite and promote this temper of heart among mankind is the great object of all the doctrines and precepts, promises and threatnings contained in the Bible.

IN the exercise of this temper Christ, who was rich, for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich. He possessed a truly public spirit—This he evidenced in his life and at his death.

THE morals inculcated in the gospel are such as naturally flow from this benevolent spirit. If rulers were uniformly governed by the principles of Christianity, all their conduct would be aimed at

the greateſt happineſs of mankind. If ſubjects were influenced by the ſpirit of the goſpel, they would give hon. or to whom honor is due, and chearfully obey civil ordinances for the LORD's ſake—And if all mankind were duly influenced by the laws of Chriſt, wars and fightings, broils and ſtrifes would ceaſe from among men, and peace and felicity would fill the world.

IT is worthy of remark, that thoſe perſons who are properly denominated *good rulers*, or *good ſubjects*, do either *really* act from the ſpirit of chriſtianity, or *appear* ſo to act. They are poſſeſſed of that benevolence the goſpel enjoins, or they put on a counterfeited appearance of it. True philanthropy, or true patriotiſm, is true chriſtianity—But that philanthropy and that patriotiſm which lead men to trample on the *rights* of GOD and the *rights* of the REDEEMER are *counterfeits* eaſily *detected*. They always *originate* in *ſelfiſhneſs*, and commonly *end* in *ruin*.

LOVE of *gold*, love of *pleaſure*, and love of *fame*, may carry perſons great lengths in pretended philanthropy or pretended patriotiſm—To obtain one or other of theſe objects, perſons will make great ſacrifices, and ſubject themſelves to great inconveniences, all under the *pretext* of love to mankind, or love to their country—But upon the ſame principle, if they are made to believe that *more gold*, *more pleaſure*, or *more fame* may be obtained by a change of conduct, they will as readily ſacrifice the *rights* of their *fellow men* and the *rights* of *community* as they now do the *rights* of GOD and the *rights* of the REDEEMER. For men will ever be governed by the ſupreme reliſh of their hearts. To what ſurpriſing lengths did a counterfeited patriotiſm lead the American *Judas*, *Benedict Arnold!* With what a dauntleſs and impetuous ſpirit did he ruſh into dangers under a pretext of love to his country! But as ſoon as a proſpect of more gold was preſented, he would ſell his country, and ſacrifice the good of millions on the infamous altar of private ambition.—On the ſame principle, many forward and boaſting patriots, upon ſome check, or diſappointment in regard to office or otherwiſe,

have had all their patriotism *wither* and *die* like *Jonah's Gourd*.

BUT that wisdom which is from above, or that patriotism which the gospel enjoins, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without *partiality* and without *hypocrisy*. The man who is influenced by this spirit will not change character with a change of prospects. He will go through good report and evil report, and still remain the same. Being defamed, degraded, disappointed, or ungratefully treated, will not extinguish his love to the happiness of his fellow men. And the highest prospects of private emolument will not induce him to sport with the rights or the happiness of others.

THOSE, therefore, who wish to exterminate, or suppress christianity, must be viewed as ignorant of the nature of it, or as enemies to the happiness of mankind. For it is obvious, that, for a person to seek not his own profit but the profit of many, or to make the felicity of others the source of personal delight, is the spirit of Christianity.—And it is not less obvious that the prevalence of such a temper would be the best support of civil government and the greatest mean of happiness in community.

3. IT is highly desirable that civil rulers and gospel ministers should treat each other with respect, and unite their influence for public good.

THESE two classes of men are indeed called to act in separate departments. But when they act consistently their separate influence, like different rivers, will empty into one common ocean of general felicity. While the civil Legislator is devising and enacting laws for the benefit of society, the gospel minister is inculcating the spirit of obedience to the laws of GOD and to the laws of the State, and enforcing his instructions by motives of infinite magnitude. Nothing, then, can be more imprudent, or more impolitic, than for civil rulers and gospel ministers to endeavor to degrade and counteract each others influence. And we may, with safety, affirm that *good* rulers and *good* ministers will not thus fall out by the way.

4. IT is important that we ſhould pay a ſacred regard to the privilege of election. The privilege of electing our own rulers is of great magnitude—We are at liberty to elect ſuch men as in our eſtimation will ſeek our happineſs—And the frequency of election gives us opportunity to diſplace thoſe who, upon experiment, diſappoint our expectations. And it is much to be regretted that this privilege ſhould be ſo frequently neglected, or abuſed. Men are too frequently choſen into important offices by a ſmall number of votes, compared with the number of electors. And in too many inſtances ballots are *wantonly* given for ſuch characters as the electors have no deſire ſhould obtain an office.—"*My vote can make no odds among ſo many*'—and "*there are enough to vote without me*,' are the common excuſes with ſuch negligent, and ſuch ſportive citizens.—But ſhould the conſtitution of government be ſo altered as to exclude them from the *privilege* of being electors, would it then *content* their minds to be told that *there is enough to vote without them?* Such negligence and ſuch ſport have a moſt fatal tendency; and ſhould they prevail, we may ſoon be reduced to the dreadful dilemma either, finally to relinquiſh the privileges of freemen, or expoſe our lives to regain them. So exceedingly delicate is the affair of election that the negligence, or folly of *one* private citizen may be the occaſion of raiſing a worthleſs character to the moſt important office in the ſtate, or even in the nation. And no man when he reſolves to neglect his privilege, or to ſport with it, can calculate the degree of injury his remiſneſs or his folly may occaſion to himſelf or to community. *One ſinner deſtroyeth much good.* But *how much* good one ſinner *may* deſtroy, or how much miſchief one ſinner, in a public office, may occaſion, no tongue can tell.

SUCH addreſſes as the ſubject and the occaſion dictate may now have their place.

HIS Excellency the GOVERNOR will be pleaſed to accept the firſt addreſs—

SIR—To addreſs you in the language of adulation, it is preſumed, would be as diſcordant to your feelings as

it would be incompatible with the dignity of the miniſterial office. However, gratitude to the Sovereign Diſpoſer of events, conſtrains us to acknowledge that, under your adminiſtration, this ſtate has had reſt—Greater evidence than this cannot be exhibited in favor of the mildneſs, vigilance and fidelity of your character—And your having, for ſuch a number of years, the ſuffrages of a free people, muſt be better evidence to your mind of the high eſteem in which your character is holden than any declaration I could make.

BUT, Sir, the high office you ſuſtain, and the degree of confidence attached to your character, afford you an opportunity of being extenſively uſeful, or of doing extenſive miſchief, according to the diſpoſition of your heart.

TOO feelingly ſenſible you never can be that it is GOD who maketh one to differ from another—that he looketh on the heart—that at his tribunal you muſt render an account for your improvement of the diſtinguiſhed talents with which you are favored; and that where much is given, much will be required.

O HOW important is ſtedfaſt and perſevering fidelity to GOD, and to the people over whom his providence has placed you! This is important, not only as it reſpects the happineſs of the people and your final deſtiny; but as it reſpects your reputation and happineſs in this life. It has required a long courſe of approved ſervices to obtain ſuch a character as you poſſeſs in the view of your fellow citizens. But in a ſhort time negligence or unfaithfulneſs in you would level this fabrick with the duſt. Should pride fill your heart and divert your attention from the public to a private intereſt;—or ſhould you but indulge the idea that modern infidelity, immorality and diſſipation would form no blemiſh in your character, the earnings of *ſix*, or *ſixteen* years may be waſted in a leſs number of months.

THE many ſtriking inſtances of apoſtacy from religion, patriotiſm and good morals are enough to make a conſiderate perſon tremble for himſelf, leſt he ſhould fall under the ſame condemnation. And they juſtify the applica-

tion of this ſolemn warning, Let him that thinketh he ſtandeth take heed leſt he fall.

IT is, Sir, our hope and our fervent prayer, that your name may never be enrolled with thoſe unhappy apoſtates. And that, at your deceaſe, the *printing preſſes* may not *groan being burdened* with falſhoods, fabricated to retrieve a good character loſt by pride and diſſipation.

IT is alſo our hope and our prayer that love to GOD, and to your country will predominate in your heart and influence all your conduct; that by piety and virtue you may riſe in the eſteem of your fellow men till with OTHNIEL and WASHINGTON you are numbered among the dead. But what did I ſay! GILMAN among the *dead!* How affecting the thought! But how certain the event! And how rapidly it haſtens!—May your path be that of the juſt, which ſhineth more and more unto the perfect day;—that at your deceaſe the WORLD may *feel* the *ſhock* and *mourning* fill the LAND.

THE Honorable COUNCIL and SENATE and GENTLEMEN of the HOUSE of REPRESENTATIVES will indulge a few words reſpectfully addreſſed to them.

AS an expreſſion of the confidence your conſtituents have in your characters they have exalted you to ſeats of honor. To you we now look up, as to Fathers, for ſuch *laws* as will give *reſt* to the State, and for ſuch *examples* as tend to *enforce* the laws you enact. It is deſirable that you ſhould ever feel that your authority is derived from the people, and that to their happineſs all your official conduct ſhould be directed. If you loſe ſight of this object, your *labors*, their *confidence* in you, and their *money* for your ſupport will be worſe than loſt. And however wiſe and good the laws may be which you enact, if you neglect to honor the laws by your own examples, you may reaſonably expect that they will be deſpiſed and violated by others. The people *feel* and have a *right* to *feel* that the laws you enact are laws for *yourſelves* as well as for *them*.

AS Fathers and Elders let me entreat you, in the moſt ſolemn manner, never to forget that HE who ruleth over men ſhould be juſt; ruling in the fear of GOD.

NEVER loſe ſight of that illuſtrious example which GOD hath ſet up in our land. The example of HIM whoſe death has occaſioned ſuch univerſal mourning. Men who are ſo callous to good impreſſions, as not to be influenced by ſuch an example, nor moved by the tribute of reſpect which has been paid to his memory, may juſtly be deemed unfit to hold a ſeat in government.

IT is probable you have all been forward to ſhow reſpect to his character and grief for his death. But the beſt tribute of reſpect which can be paid to his memory is that of *imitating* his *virtues*—his regard to GOD and religion—his benevolence and clemency—his moderation and firmneſs, his indefatigable efforts and his unparralleled perſeverance in promoting the welfare of the nation. Happy would it be for our land, and happy for all who hold offices, if all in authority ſhould copy his example. And, after we have ſo abundantly, and ſo publickly, manifeſted our approbation of his character, how can we anſwer it to GOD, or to our own conſciences, if we practically ſet at nought thoſe virtues by which he became, as an inſtrument, the DELIVERER, the GUARDIAN and the GLORY of our land.

THE diſcourſe may be concluded by a few words to the whole aſſembly :——

My FATHERS *and* FELLOW CITIZENS,

THROUGH the rich and long-ſuffering goodneſs of that GOD by whom States and Empires riſe and fall, we this day poſſeſs the ineſtimable privilege of a free government. Our eyes behold an auguſt body of men who have derived their offices and authority from our ſuffrages as a free people—But theſe political privileges, though purchaſed at great expenſe, are precarious bleſſings.

BY the *pains*, the *groans* and the *blood* of many thouſands of our countrymen the way was prepared for us to enjoy the bleſſings and ſweets of freedom. But how long we ſhall enjoy theſe invaluable bleſſings is a matter of great uncertainty.—It depends wholly on the Sovereign Pleaſure of HIM in whoſe hands all nations are as clay in the hand of the potter.

VAIN is all our confidence in the increaſed population of the States, or the vaſt reſources our country affords ;—vain is our confidence in the valor of our ſoldiers or ſeamen, or in the ſkill and bravery of our military or naval Commanders ;—vain is our confidence in the wiſdom, firmneſs and magnanimity of the illuſtrious PRESIDENT of the United States ;—vain, vain are all our objects of confidence if the Lord of Hoſts be againſt us.

WE have been taught by a recent event that GOD can eaſily remove the pillars of our national exiſtence. By the fall of the FIRST the whole building was made to tremble to its very foundation. And from the ordinary courſe of nature we are led to fear that the fall of the SECOND is not at a great diſtance. Let us unite in humble prayer to the SUPREME ARCHITECT that the hour may be delayed till another is formed and erected of equal firmneſs and excellency.

THE probability of having our privileges continued greatly depends on the returns we make to our Divine Benefactor. If we forget or deſpiſe the Father of our mercies ; if we proſtitute our freedom to the vile purpoſes of faction, or licentiouſneſs ;—if we convert our ſeaſons of election into ſcenes of ſtrife, or ſcenes of revelling and diſſipation ;—if, after we have elected men into office, we make them the objects of our envy, raillery and abuſe, we ſhall prove ourſelves to be unworthy of the privileges of a free people, we ſhall provoke the Lord to jealouſy, and may expect to feel the effects of his diſpleaſure.

HE can change the times and the ſeaſons, and diſappoint our moſt flattering expectations. It is,

indeed, a fearful thing, for nations, as well as for individuals, to fall into the hand of the living GOD. Should we provoke his vengeance, we, who now boaſt of the privileges of freemen, may ſoon, in the ſtyle of ſcripture, be *ſold* into the hands of a foreign power. Or inſtead of that *reſt* which we have ſo long enjoyed we may be diſtreſſed, weakened and deſtroyed by internal factions and civil wars. And in many other ways we may be made to feel the anger of GOD for our impiety and ingratitude.

IT, therefore, behoves us all to feel our dependance and be humble before GOD;—to repent of our iniquities and render praiſe for divine benefits; to revere the perfect laws of heaven and the ſalutary laws of the land;—to forbear the ſin of ſpeaking evil of dignities;—to pray for ſuch as are in authority, giving honor to whom honor is due;—to ſuppreſs in ourſelves the firſt riſings of a factious ſpirit, and to cultivate that friendly affection which is the eſſence of true religion, the baſis of public peace and felicity, and the preparation of the ſoul for eternal bleſſedneſs.

I HAD calculated to add no more; but the exigency of the times demands a *ſpecial* caution — Our OTHNIEL is *dead!* and there is danger that the *reſt* of our land will not only be diſturbed but deſtroyed. Therefore, as a watchman, I feel conſtrained to warn you, my fellow citizens, to *Beware of Men*—of men who wiſh to alienate your affections from our government, and to perſuade you to embrace the demoralizing and diſorganizing ſyſtems of France.

DO you wiſh to ſee tumult and terror ſpread through the nation? and your fellow citizens, without regard to ſex or age, arreſted by thouſands and caſt into priſons; then with a mock trial, or without any trial at all, dragged from priſon, ſtripped, crouded into boats, chained down, and ſunk in rivers or lakes? Would it afford you pleaſure to ſee the *guillotine* erected in our land, and to be witneſſes of its fatal operations? Would it be to you a delightful employment to be the managers of this deadly machine, or to be the carriers of human blood, in buckets, from morning to evening?—Would it pleaſe you to ſee aſſaſſination and maſſacre depopulate our cities by myriads in a week? Are you prepared to join the *ſhouts* of *joy* when it ſhall be publickly "announced that the highways are impaſſable by reaſon of the number of the dead," who have been ſlain by indiſcriminate carnage? Would it be a pleaſant ſight to behold our towns and villages laid waſte and plundered by French ſoldiers; and your *mothers*, your *wives*, your *ſiſters* and your *daughters*, from ſeventy down to twelve years of age, in the moſt brutal manner, *raviſhed* before your eyes? Would it add to your happineſs to ſee——but I forbear a further alluſion to deeds, at the thought of which *modeſty* muſt *bluſh* and *humanity ſhudder!* But if your feelings recoil at the mention of ſuch ſcenes of horror, beware of the *principles* which lead to ſuch meaſures, and of the *men* who would perſuade you to embrace them.

CAN it be that any in this audience have embraced theſe deleterious principles, and wiſh to propagate them in our community? If ſo, in the fear of GOD, I would aſk what benefit *you* can expect

if this ſyſtem ſhould operate in our land as it has done in France? If you are rich, French principles will, for this very reaſon, mark you out as victims for ſpeedy deſtruction. If high offices be the objects of your purſuit, it is poſſible you may obtain them for a moment. But it is to be obſerved that *all* cannot be in office at the ſame time; and others of *your principles* and your *diſpoſition*, ſeeing you exalted, would envy your ſtate and aſpire for "*equality*." And as the *end*, in their view, would ſanctify the *means* the probability is that they would ſoon cauſe you to be aſſaſſinated, or guillotined, or baniſhed without the form of trial and ſent beyond the ſeas——It is devoutly to be wiſhed that all our countrymen who are fond of this *ſyſtem* of *deſtruction* might have their eyes opened to ſee their madneſs and folly;—and if nothing elſe will anſwer the purpoſe it is deſirable that they ſhould, all as one, go over to France, where their beloved ſyſtem reigns with *all* its *comforts* and in *all* its *horrors*; and leave this happy land to thoſe who wiſh for REST.

NOTE.

IT has been ſuggeſted that the obſervations in the preceding Sermon upon the French government have been underſtood as implying diſapprobation of the conduct of our government in the late attempt for negotiation. The author, therefore, takes liberty to obſerve that he had no ſuch intention. Though he has *very little* confidence in the *integrity* of the Arch-Conſul, he has *much* in the *wiſdom* of our Preſident—He would further obſerve that he has no wiſh to excite hatred to the French nation, nor to any of his own countrymen; but to the principles and ſpirit which appear to have governed in the French revolutions he would gladly excite univerſal and everlaſting hatred. So be it!

Amen